The New York Times Book Review
3 August 1969

The Secret War for Europe

A Dossier of Espionage.
By Louis Hagen.
With a Foreword by Sir Kenneth Strong, K.B.E., C.B.E.
Illustrated. 287 pp. New York: Stein & Day. $5.95.

Hitler's Plot to Kill The Big Three

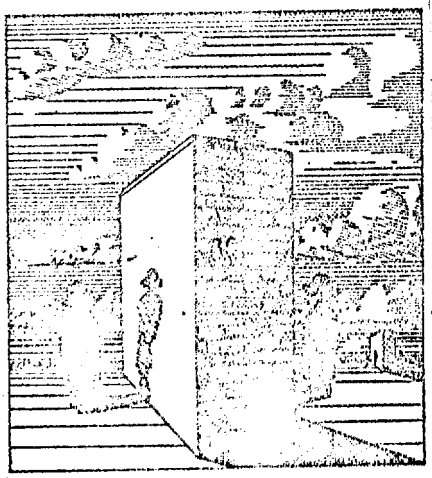
By Laslo Havas.
Translated from the Hungarian by Kathleen Szasz.
Revised Edition, with additional material translated by Jean Ure.
280 pp. New York: Cowles Book Company. $5.95.

The Red Orchestra

By Gilles Perrault.
Translated by Peter Wiles.
Illustrated. 512 pp. New York: Simon & Schuster. $7.95.

By CHRISTOPHER FELIX

Several years ago, in an access of moral fervor, Walter Lippmann used his widely circulated column to denounce "the activities of the C.I.A. which are outside genuine intelligence" as "self-defeating." The clear implication was that espionage itself is not self-defeating. At the time I responded — to a smaller audience — that Mr. Lippmann was wrong. I argued that the secret political operations which are often the accompaniment of espionage are not self-defeating — and accepted the implicit argument that espionage also was not. Yet, I could have argued, without any inconsistency,

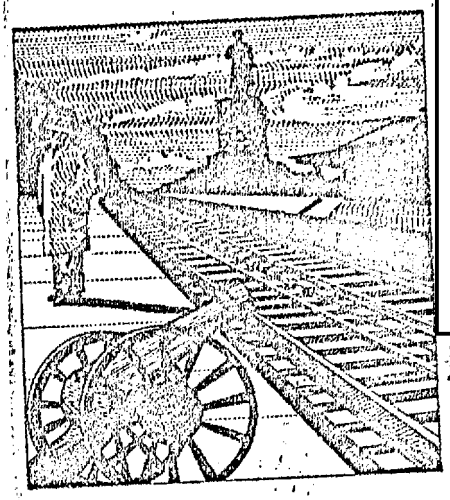


that espionage is self-defeating. It all depends on which of the many aspects of espionage one is examining.

Viewed as a way of life (or profession, if you prefer), espionage is indeed, for the great majority of its practitioners, self-defeating. If the stumbling, betrayed characters of John Le Carré's fiction, for example, carry any message, surely this is it. Now here come three factual accounts of espionage operations all of which, in this aspect, carry this same message. But the self-defeat involved goes beyond the sufferings, the betrayals, the violent deaths, and the broken lives these three books record. The fact is that most people engaged knowingly and professionally in espionage begin, after a certain point, to long for normalcy; this is the true meaning of Le Carré's memorable phrase, "to come in out of the cold." The reluctance of even the most successful professional spies to discuss their past is often due less to a tradition of eternal secrecy than to the sheer desire to forget it all and get on with living.

Of the closely allied profession of diplomacy Romain Gary, reflecting recently on his experiences, said, "Diplomats the world over live under glass. Protected. Outside the game. Around them is revolution, famine, horror. This state of affairs ends by undermining them, inside... [Certainly diplomacy] had a fascinating side. Now it has become bureaucracy." With only minor modifications essentially the same things can be said of espionage.

A great many spies are more "protected" than is commonly supposed — as the constant traffic in exchanges attests; espionage too has its "fascinating side," which in part



at least is the sulphurous smell of power; and it certainly suffers from "bureaucracy." But, in this aspect of its effect on the individual, the most important thing it shares with diplomacy is Gary's main point: the essential isolation from the multiple realities of human existence. Every profession has its *déformation professionnelle*. That of espionage is servitude to a single reality, to the point where judgment, relationships and actions are of necessity in perpetual conflict with all other human rationales.

Minor manifestations of this are usually no more than bizarre. I recall a truly hair-raising ride to luncheon with a former colleague risen to rarefied heights in the C.I.A.; he drove through Washington's sedate streets as though in the lead at the Monte Carlo Rally. But my friend is not the rally type, so I felt obliged to remark on his singular behavior to another former colleague. "Of course, of course," he soothed me. "He was just practicing shaking off his tail." But the major manifestations are not amusing. To accept the word of anyone engaged in espionage, be he your closest friend, is not merely naïve; it may well be dangerous. Surely this is a situation which is, in human terms, self-defeating.

This self-defeating characteristic of espionage, in its human aspects, I believe, the direct result of still another aspect of espionage. The latter is the role of espionage as the spearhead of the State in international politics; espionage is the vanguard of diplomacy and of the interests of the State. (And it is in this aspect that it is *not* self-defeating.) As the vanguard, espionage reflects the underlying realities of international relations, long before the

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